



NEWS RELEASE

RICHMOND DISTRICT OFFICE

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SBA RICHMOND DISTRICT OFFICE CONFERS 2003 SMALL BUSINESS MINORITY PERSON OF THE YEAR TO TIDEWATER ENTREPRENEUR ...

RICHMOND. . . Jimmie G. Anderson, Acting District Director of the U.S. Small Business Administration's Richmond District Office announced today that **Dennis F. Gilbert**, Founder & CEO of Tesoro Corporation, of Virginia Beach, Virginia, has been selected by the SBA as Virginia's Minority Small Business Person of the Year for 2003. "Tesoro Corporation has not only experienced amazing growth, but exhibits a commitment to quality, customer service and employee well-being well beyond other businesses of its age or industry" said Anderson.

Mr. Gilbert will be honored in Norfolk, VA at the quarterly meeting of the SBA Richmond District Procurement Acquisition Committee meeting at the Freemason Abbey Restaurant on 10/15/03, at 11:30 am. This event will coincide with SBA's National Minority Enterprise Development (Midweek) 2003 event held in Washington, DC September 28-October 1, 2003.

Dennis incorporated Tesoro in June 1997 after a successful federal civilian career as an engineer with the Construction Division of the Atlantic Division (LANTDIV), Naval Facilities Engineering Command in Norfolk, VA and tours at ROICC Norfolk, and Rota, Spain. The firm has been in business for six years and has grown from 4 to 132 employees. The company is a general construction contractor specializing commercial and government contracting.

Dennis was honored recognized as the firm with the highest revenue growth in the Commonwealth of Virginia's "Fantastic 50" in 2003, a designation given to growing and successful firms. The firm has received the Virginia Chamber of Commerce Vanguard award for being the highest growth company in Virginia and numerous professional awards

Tesoro supports many local community projects i.e., MS-150 Bike Tour, missionary projects to build a school in the Dominican Republic, provide uniforms and sponsors various youth orientated organizations.

For more information about all of the SBA's programs for small businesses, call the SBA Answer Desk at 1-800-USAASK SBA or TDD 704-344-6640. Also, visit the SBA's extensive Web site at www.sba.gov.
